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FATHER RYAN'S SPIRITUAL CALL

JUAN CAMACHO DELIVERS IN THE COURT

DOVE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL LEAGUE FLIES HIGH

DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

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The DYS Child Protection Unit is mandated by law to conduct assessments and investigations on reports of child abuse and/or neglect. Maltreatment of children usually falls into one or more of four general areas:

1 Neglect | **2 Physical Abuse** | **3 Sexual Abuse** | **4 Emotional Abuse**

What is CHILD ABUSE?

Child Abuse is harm or risk of harm to a child by the parent, caretaker, or another person, responsible for the child

What are the different types of Child Abuse?

- **Physical Abuse:** Causing physical injury to a child by kicking, biting, burning, or otherwise harming the child.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Hurting the child's feelings by belittling, habitual blaming, constant criticism, threats and withholding love, support and guidance.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual contact between an adult and child, including fondling of the child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy and sexual exploitation.

What is NEGLECT?

Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs.

What are the different types of Neglect?

- **Physical Neglect:** Lack of health care/personal cleanliness, food, clothing, shelter or the lack of supervision.
- **Educational Neglect:** Failure to enroll mandatory school-aged children; chronic truancy.
- **Emotional Neglect:** Not caring about the child's feelings and mental health; failing to provide love, nurture and attention.
- **Medical Neglect:** Failure to provide appropriate health/dental care for child.

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CASELOAD	INCOMING CASES				TOTAL
	1st QR	2nd QR	3rd QR	4th QR	
Reported Cases	51	48	60	20	**179**
Subject of Report (# of Children Involved)	138	126	116	39	**419**
TYPE OF REPORTED CASES					
NEW CASES	45	45	54	16	**160**
ON-GOING CASES (Re-reported)	6	3	6	4	**19**
CASE DISTRIBUTION					
EMOTIONAL	4	3	0	1	**8**
NEGLECT (general)	20	13	37	10	**80**
PHYSICAL	8	9	11	2	**30**
SEXUAL	14	13	14	3	**44**
OTHERS (Support Services, Teen Preg., DV, Minor sex trafficking)	8	10	11	10	**39**
				TOTAL	**201**

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We got this!

The medical issues of our managing editor not only thrust me in putting together the April-June issue of TAGA Sports, but it also forced us to take a closer look at our mortality. How ironic that while we espoused the benefits of healthy living and playing all sorts of sports through this magazine, we could hardly squeeze 30 minutes from our day to exercise.

Hiking to Saipan's favorite tourist spots at least once a month. Basketball pick-up games every Saturday, and sometimes Sunday. Volleyball practices and games a couple of times a week. Jogging around the Oleai oval. Brisk

walking while walking the dog a couple of times a week. That's just several of the physical activities—not necessarily sports—that TAGA *Sports* and *Saipan Tribune* staff had been doing the past couple of months since our El Capitan Jayvee Vallejera went on medical leave in the Philippines.

It's no coincidence then that this quarter's issue of TAGA *Sports* is chockfull of stories about healthy living and people who strive to achieve it.

Our resident nutrition expert, Kaisa Anderson, for instance wrote about the best way to hydrate after a workout, giving us the low-down on The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly on what to drink after physical activity.

Dre Delos Santos' back to basics in losing weight reinforces the philosophy that it's not how often and how intense you train but how willing you're to make it a lifestyle which is the true roadmap to keeping the pounds off.

In another first on the islands, Jon Perez wrote about Latte Built, a 24-hour gym owned by bodybuilding champion Derek Cutting. Now, you can't use "the gym is already closed" excuse not to work out.

Tan Holdings' Lose Big, Win Big is also featured in this quarter's issue of TAGA *Sports*. It tells the story of how several of the conglomerates' employees were able to shed more than 900 lbs during the program.

Our cover story may not be about conquering physical challenges but Frauleine Villanueva-Dizon did her best to conquer her fear of heights when she jumped out of a plane from 14,000 feet. She did all that just to get the best view of Saipan?

Thomas Manglona II contributed not one but two articles for this issue—both focused on two people's quest: CNMI national player Kobee Mendoza's dream of making it to the NBA and Father Ryan Jimenez's spiritual "call" to compete in triathlons.

Juan Camacho seems to be transitioning well from swimming heartthrob to basketball hero as alluded to in a piece by Roselyn B. Monroyo. I still remember the now U.S. Post Office staff turning heads not only in the pool but also off it with several Japanese schoolgirls even mistaking him for Leonardo DiCaprio when he competed there in the early 2000s.

Monroyo also wrote about the Dove Women's Football League and how female soccer players are now thriving with a "League of their own."

In Where Are They Now? Perez updates us on what former Public Health medical director Richard "Doc" Brostrom is doing nowadays.

I have fond memories of covering the affable 6'4" center-point guard when I first arrived on Saipan in 2001. But one that sticks out is when he approached me out of nowhere and commended me for my work as a sports reporter. I said I just write about sports, but the good doctor said the stuff I write has inspired a lot of people on island to get up from their lazy chairs and play sports. I guess, Brostrom was right after all. It's time to practice what we preach—or in our case—what we write.

MARK RABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

COVER ART
TAGA *Sports* staff writer Frauleine Villanueva-Dizon plunges from 14,000 feet during a tandem-jump with Sky Dive Saipan's Brad Patterson.

Photography by
SKY DIVE SAIPAN

TAGA SPORTS

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JERRY TAN
President

ELI ARAGO
Senior Vice President

JAYVEE VALLEJERA
Managing Editor

MARK RABAGO
Associate Editor

JUN DAYAO
Layout and Design

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
JON PEREZ
FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
Staff Writers

KAISA ANDERSON
DRE DELOS SANTOS
THOMAS MANGLONA II
Contributors

BETH DEL ROSARIO
DONNA RIVERA
Advertising

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To inquire about ad ratesor to place an ad, call (670) 235-2440, 235-6397
Fax: (670) 235-3740
Email: beth_delrosario@saipantribune.com

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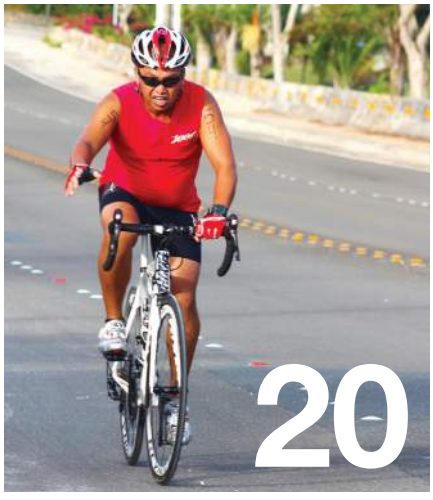

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WRITERS' BLOC

KAISA ANDERSON
Kaisa Anderson is a Registered Dietitian for the Public School System. The nutrition article in this TAGA *Sports* issue on hydration is dedicated to her Hydroflask, her water bottle that keeps her hydrated and thirst quenched. She is obsessed with it. Also, she is currently in the middle of changing hobbies and isn't sure what's in store for her next, but is still patiently waiting for tennis nets to show up at AMP.

THOMAS MANGLONA II
Thomas is a Mount Carmel School senior, writes for the *Saipan Tribune* and *North Star*, and reports for the Pacific News Center. The 17-year-old has a burning passion for journalism, enjoys meeting new people, going to new places, and capturing important community moments. He is set to major in journalism at a U.S university after graduation.

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
Frauleine considers herself an adventurer, hiking the Philippines' third highest peak among others and going on solo trips in her home country and abroad. Before skydiving, however, the most daring thing she has done was to move and live on Saipan away from her family to become a journalist. She turns one year on island this month!

ROSELYN MONROYO
Roselyn has been challenged by Juan Camacho to a one-on-one basketball game. No chance. She knows a strong defender when she sees one.

JON PEREZ
Covering sports events outside of Metro Manila in the Philippines is the one that Jon misses the most. He, however, doesn't want to experience the nightmarish traffic back home and the frequent road rage shown by drivers.

DRE DELOS SANTOS
Dre Delos Santos, a Mount Carmel School alumni, earned his Bachelor's of Science in Kinesiology at the University of Hawaii and now runs his own fitness business as a certified strength coach in Honolulu.

Email letters to the editor to editor@saipantribune.com or mail to PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan MP 96950. Submissions to TAGA Sports must include the writer's name, village address (no P.O. boxes), and daytime phone or mobile number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity and may be published or used in any medium. All submissions become the property of the publication and will not be returned.

Quench your thirst... and your workout

KAISAANDERSONRD
Contributing Writer

It's no secret when living on an island it requires a great deal of hydration, even if you are not an athlete. However, for the athlete, there is a greater task of keeping your body properly hydrated before, during, and after a workout due to sweating and other metabolic processes. Drinking water or fluids to stay hydrated is such a simple concept, but what we fail to realize is the complex and important bodily functions which require water to occur. Nevertheless, wouldn't you like to know some of the most recommended resources for hydration? Let's review the techniques and sources of hydrating as the good, the bad (or not as good), and the ugly.

THE GOOD

Water, the plain ol' good stuff. Contrary to belief or other beverages these days, there is no substitute to H2O. That is what your body needs to perform its best. It is recommended from the American College of Sports Medicine position paper on fluid balance to drink about 500 mL (about 17 ounces) of fluid about two hours before exercise. This allows your body to hydrate but also time to use the bathroom before the big race or competition.

Coconut water has received many praises as being a great source of hydration when working out. It is high in potassium and low in carbohydrates (if there is a concern for calories). The Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise found the best time to drink coconut water is after a light workout or training session. It is not recommended as a beverage during or for recovery from long endurance training. This is because it lacks the carbohydrates to energize the body during training and lacks the sodium needed to replenish the body with the needed water after the activity.

Sports drinks are well-diluted beverages that contain usually well-balanced amounts of electrolytes, carbohydrates, and water to hydrate the body for optimal performance. Some sources recommend to choose a sports drink that provides 14 grams of carbohydrates, 28 mg of potassium, and 100 mg of sodium per 8 oz. serving. Keep in mind sports drinks are full of sugar/carbohydrates that are meant for energy and the minerals of potassium and sodium are meant for aid in hydration. This is recommended for endurance training and rehydration where these nutrients will be utilized, not for light workouts under one hour.

Hydrating foods such as melon, cucumbers, celery, lettuce, and strawberries, to name a few, provide water to your body as you eat. It's a great benefit of getting two things done at once. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends eating a nutritionally balanced diet with fluids 24 hours before an event. This may sound simple, but it can surprise you how many athletes do not eat adequately before an event due to time constraints, preparation, training, nerves, or making weight for divisions. Foods containing a good source of water content give themselves an advantage to hydrate and feed themselves well before a big event.

Fitness and designer water such as Propel or VOSS, respectively, were a big trend in the early 2000s, but they still have a spot in hydrating as they are mainly water. Usually consisting of lightly flavored water with a variety of minerals and vitamins, they were becoming a top choice for rehydrating. Please keep in mind these beverages may not be as effective as a sports drink in endurance training or long periods of activity, because they do not provide the electrolytes and carbohydrates for energy as sports drinks do. Regardless, they are still beneficial as their main ingredient, in fact, is water. It is recommended by the American College of Sports Medicine to consume liquids during endurance events which are easy to grab and consume. A lot of designer water is pricey and bottles are usually made of glass, therefore it doesn't really fall into the category of easy to consume or grab. ➜

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2016 SPORTS CALENDAR

APRIL

Rites of Passage 19
Trench Tech's first offering for 2016 will feature one title fight and 14 supporting kickboxing and MMA bouts.

NMC Foundation Open Golf Tournament
This year's golf tournament is being held in celebration of Northern Marianas College's 35th anniversary and proceeds will be used to repair and construct campus facilities damaged by Typhoon Soudelor last year.

Saipan Marathon
Visiting and local runners race in 10K, half marathon, marathon, and 50K courses and enjoy the scenic views on the island.

MAY

Saipan Little League Finals
The island's Little League program will hold championship games in the Majors, Junior, Senior, and Big League divisions and select Saipan's representatives to the CNMI District Tournament.

IT&E Northern Marianas Junior Championships
For the fourth straight year, the CNMI will host a Junior ITF ranking event with the Commonwealth players battling representatives from Asia and Oceania/Pacific.

McDonald's/PSS All Schools Athletics Championships
The CNMI's student-athletes gather together and compete in running, throwing, and jumping events.

JUNE

North Pacific Regional Championships
CNMI junior tennis players challenge their counterparts from Palau, FSM, and Guam for slots on the North Pacific Team that will compete in the 2016 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji in August.

Oceania Championships
This swimming competition will be held in Fiji with the CNMI invited to participate in the biennial event.

Asia Pacific and Middle East Regional Tournament
The CNMI Little League teams compete in this annual tournament to vie for slots on the World Series in four divisions, namely Majors, Senior, Junior, and Big League.

This advertisement is sponsored by Tan Siu Lin Foundation

THE BAD [OR NOT AS GOOD]

Soda. I almost hate saying this... Soda does hydrate. Yes, contrary to many people's beliefs, it does count toward your daily fluid intake. A big HOWEVER, it should not be a first choice for hydrating as it contains high amounts of sugar, caffeine, and carbonation which can upset some stomachs before or after a workout. There are so many other good choices that naturally coincide with your body for hydration, compared to a soft drink. So I strongly recommend those as first choices for hydration despite what the facts say.

Coffee. The caffeine content in beverages, such as coffee has been a hot topic in the sports nutrition world due to its performance effects and diuretic (causes water loss in the body) capabilities. As for the believed diuretic effects, the results showed insignificant findings on causing immediate dehydration and its role in athletic performance. Nonetheless, coffee would not be my first recommendation for fluid replacement due to temperature, even though it is does count toward fluid intake. As simple as it sounds, the American College of Sports Medicine position paper recommends drinking beverages between the temperatures of 59-72 degrees Fahrenheit. Which is what we call lukewarm coffee my friends; a temperature I think most are not fond of for coffee. As mentioned above, the best choices for hydration are listed first in this article.

THE UGLY

Alcohol will in fact dehydrate you. Alcohol acts as a strong diuretic, meaning it causes water loss within the body, because it blocks the release of the hormone needed for water resorption. In addition, if too much alcohol is consumed and makes you sick, and vomiting ensues, water and fluids are lost putting you behind in being fully hydrated for training the next day. Need I say more, don't drink it before and do not drink it after an event until you have fully hydrated your body after the workout or big competition.

Throughout the many sports articles written on hydration, most emphasize the importance of teaching athletes proper hydration throughout training and competitions. It clearly is a neglected topic as it should be simple to drink water and replenish the body of fluids, but it is consistently recommended when teaching athletes nutrition. Your body is 75 percent water and it needs it for many metabolic functions for your body to function properly, this includes athletic activities. Help your muscles process energy the way it needs to for optimal athletic performance by drinking water. Let's drink up!

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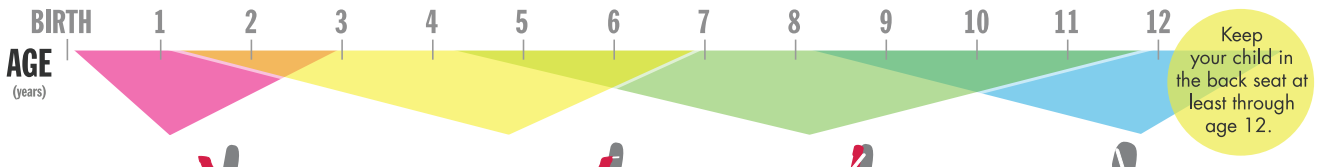
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions; read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.



REAR-FACING CAR SEAT

Your child under age 1 should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats: Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time.

FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT

Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. It's the best way to keep him or her safe. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness.

BOOSTER SEAT

Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.

SEATBELT

Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat because it's safer there.

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- A **BOOSTER SEAT** positions the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body.
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5 common training mistakes

On many occasions, I've interacted with a lot people wanting to shed some weight, hoping to gain an advantage in life, and to ultimately look better. Not surprisingly though, is that they all make the same mistakes over and over again. They place far too much emphasis on different protocols and methods of training when all they should be adhering to are the basics. And you know what, chances are that you're making the same mistakes as well.

DRE DELOS SANTOS
Contributing Writer

1 JUMPING FROM ONE BOAT TO THE NEXT

Improving your health isn't rocket science. Get enough sleep, eat a sufficient amount of food, go for a walk, and drink more water. But in that same token, most people have no concept of how long it takes to see progress. They always seem to be flummoxed that getting stronger and improving the way you look will take time.

Let me be clear: the effectiveness of a training program pales in comparison to your ability to consistently put in the work. You're never going to get good at anything or develop any proficiency if you keep switching gears. Focus on one ideal and give your body some time to adapt.

If you're not giving yourself at least a minimum of 12 weeks, forget about it.

2 NOT EATING ENOUGH

Most people go to the extremes when it comes to fat loss by restricting their caloric intake. It's as if starting a training and nutrition program is akin to starving and killing yourself in the gym. In other words, their mindset is fixed on working harder and eating less. If you're into digging deep holes that's hard to climb out of, by all means.

While there is some merit to the "calories-in, calories-out" method, it's not the be-all end-all approach for fat loss. The pertinent issue here is that you're basically starving yourself and while it may work short-term, you will inevitably gain back what you have worked so hard to lose.

Reason being is because your thyroid function will start to diminish as a result of decreased energy (caloric intake) coupled with higher frequency (training). Simply put, this will turn down your metabolism further suppressing your body's ability to breakdown fat. Remember—fuel up!

3 EXCESSIVE CARDIO

Nothing makes me cringe more than seeing a person ride the elliptical or run on the treadmill for hours. There's a time and place for aerobic and circuit style workouts— there's no denying that. But in order to build muscle, you need to lift weights.

Cardiovascular activity (aerobic) is a vital component for fat loss, but it's not the most efficient. You don't need to beat yourself up by running everyday or going to cycling class five times a week. Long bouts of an aerobic-based workout on a day-to-day basis causes the release of excess amount of cortisol, which will cause muscle breakdown and storage of fat. Moreover, it becomes mentally exhausting and it will take a toll on your body.

4 NO FOCUS ON STRENGTH WORK

As I've alluded to in the past, a big mistake a lot of people make (whether their goal is get lean or build muscle) is not placing a premium on strength. Muscle is metabolically expensive in the body. Meaning, the more muscle you have, the more calories you are able to burn. That is why I'm still dumbfounded by the fact that there are still men and women out there who think that lifting weights is going to make you "bulky and muscular."

You have to lift an appreciable amount of weight that provides enough stimulus for your body to adapt and grow. Who doesn't want to get stronger? Being able to do a chin-up(s), deadlift 1-2x your bodyweight, or move without pain—the confidence that comes with that is advantageous to your overall health.

5 YOU'RE NOT INVINCIBLE

Look, I get it—you want to get to your goal as fast as humanly possible. As much as I appreciate people who work hard and bust their balls to achieve the physique they want, you're not invincible. The fact of the matter is, a lot of people are under the impression that training to failure or to the point of exhaustion is indicative of a stellar workout—far from it. Take a day off.

THE CNMI'S FIRST 24-HOUR GYM

Latte Built

JON PEREZ
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

There won't be any more excuses for you not to start getting into shape and having a healthy lifestyle with the CNMI's first 24-hour gym, Latte Built Functional Fitness and Nutrition, opening this April.

The fitness center, owned by champion bodybuilder Derek Cutting and his wife Tannie Chong, is located at the third floor of the CDA Building in San Jose. "Going up to the gym is already a cardio workout," Cutting said with a laugh.

Cutting said that aside from a 24-hour surveillance camera and other security measures, he has also assigned numbers and electronic keys to members of the gym. "Each individual member has a unique code number that is in my system."

The electronic keys are just similar to the cards being used in offices and other business establishments. "I gave them electronic keys to the gym so they can workout anytime they want. I also have surveillance cameras that's why if there's any equipment missing, I just get into my system and see who is the last person that went inside the gym."

Although small in terms of space, the facility boasts a relaxing view of the ocean and the sunset at Oleai Beach.

"There are also showers here, so you can bring your work clothes and sweat it out in the morning, shower, get dressed, and off to your office," said Cutting.

Cutting previously held his boot camps and other classes either at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan or at the American Memorial Park, but now he has his a facility of his own. "My classes starts at 5:30am and I will add more in the future."

Parents can also bring their kids, with Cutting also designing a boot camp program for them. The program is called Little Lattes, a 45-minute class every Saturday at 10:30am.

The gym has a more than 7-foot climbing wall designed for kids, dumbbells, plates, barbell, ropes, pull-up bars, and rings.

Cutting said the place at the CDA Building was not his first choice as he also checked other facilities on the island. "I also checked some warehouses but the prices of renting the place are ridiculous."

"Good thing I met with Oscar Camacho and checked out the CDA building. I came here and also checked a space at the back, which shows the mountainside. I saw this space that has the view of the beach and we worked out the lease and now we're here," said Cutting.

"The whole building is owned by CDA and I'm thankful for all the help they gave me in trying to get the lease. They are excellent landlords."

Everest Kitchen, co-owned by Laxmi Shrestha, catered the food— composed of healthy dishes and other snacks—during the gym's opening. They also gave away gift certificates.

Aside from the fitness center, Cutting also sells the YOLI natural supplements brand and have items like T-shirts, yoga mats, and equipment for abdominal exercises that helps support your back, and water bottles. "I plan to add more stuff here for my members and other clients."

FEATURE

Mendoza shoots for his dreams stateside

THOMAS MANGLONA II
Contributing Writer

Kobee Mendoza sports his Thomas Jefferson High School gear.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

At 6'1 Kobee Mendoza matriculated to Thomas Jefferson High School in Auburn, Washington for his senior year to reach new heights and shoot for his dreams of joining the National Basketball Association.

Kobee Mendoza, left, takes a shot during one of his first stateside games at Thomas Jefferson High School.

"Leaving everything you're familiar with is hard. Leaving my loved ones was the hardest thing, but if you really want something then the sacrifice is doable," he told The STACK, an online Washington sports magazine, in a separate interview.

That same conviction has sustained Mendoza's passion, which started in the 5th grade as a member of the San Vicente Elementary School Canaries. He quickly grew to become a well-known student athlete at Marianas High School and island-wide as a three-time MVP.

Although moving thousands of miles away from home came with its own struggles, he said that simply being exposed to higher caliber talent has made him a better player.

"Everything out here is another level, from practices, plays, and players to student sections, bands, and uniforms," he added. "Every practice is organized and intense."

He explained that he is taking it one day at a time, maintaining his pace with more stateside-trained student athletes.

"Teams are disciplined and tough. I'm definitely adjusting and improving on each game. If only I moved earlier," he noted.

Thomas Jefferson High School head basketball coach at the time Kyle Templeton separately told the STACK that he did not think much of Mendoza when he heard he would be joining the team. When he told one of the players to accompany him on the court, the coach said that everyone was impressed with Mendoza at practice.

"[The kids] told me that 'Kobee is legit. He is so good and he is going to be awesome."

In Washington, Mendoza kicked off his senior year as the starting point guard for the first half of the season then as a 6th man.

The Jefferson team and Mendoza finished the season 11-12 and made history by reaching the playoffs and hosting a playoff game. Ultimately, the team finished second in their league just behind the No. 1-ranked team in Washington. He even earned an all-league honorable mention.

As graduation day nears, Mendoza said that his future is a bit uncertain, but has made plans to play basketball at the junior college level in the northwest, where he visited prospective schools. He plans to make a final decision as to where the next court he will play on this month.

Mendoza said he already received an offer from Wenatchee Valley College with an official athletic scholarship and a roster spot. He also told TAGA *Sports* that Portland Community College, Shoreline Community, and Yakima Valley College have expressed interest in him as well.

Mendoza told TAGA *Sports* that he draws his commitment, passion, and dedication to the sport from his father, Edsel Mendoza, a former CNMI national player. He also attributes his success to his mother, Clarice.

He hopes more youth seek opportunity beyond Saipan's shores, too. He urges them to "never be complacent and learn from elders, other youth, experiences, and from mistakes." He added, "[The youth] should make the most of each day because things can change so quickly."

As the demands of a burgeoning and intense sport increase, so does his motivation. Even with the weight of the islands on his shoulders as he represents his family and peers on the court, Mendoza said he is fortunate to be playing on a stateside court even if it is 5,000 miles away from home.

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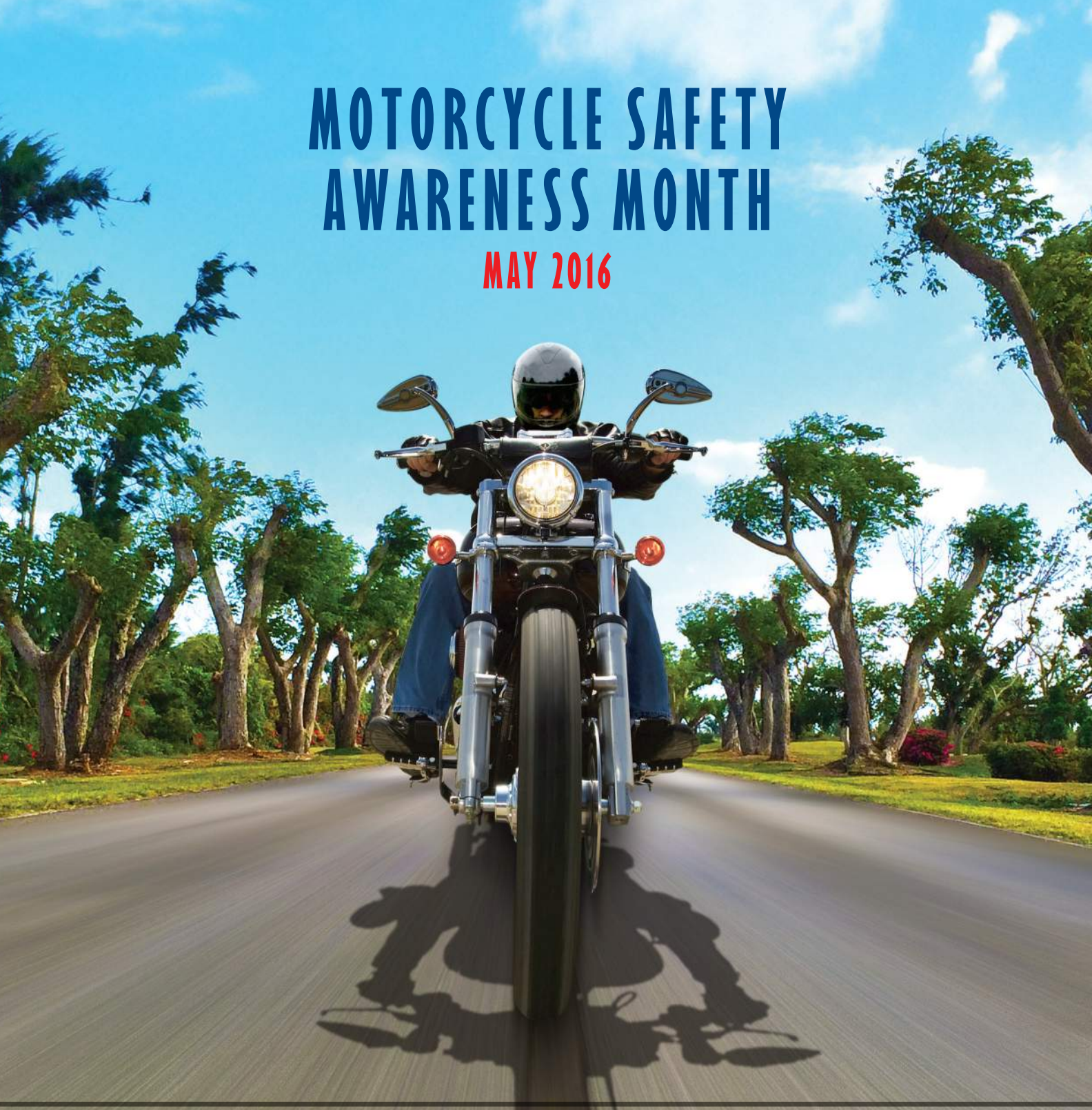

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Falling, flying, SKYDIVING

What's it like jumping out of a perfectly good plane…and why you need to try it

FRAULEINEVILLANUEVA-DIZON
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

SKY DIVE SAIPAN

Side note: just how high 14,000 feet was, Roselyn told moment we jumped out of the plane, she couldn't

Imagine your legs dangling 14,000 feet up in the sky as you sit on the edge of the plane's wide-open door—the cold wind rushing to your face and around you the vast cerulean sky.

This is not for the faint-hearted. I knew that. But my heart wasn't that strong and I never thought what to expect either. I never tried bungee jumping, nor have I dared cliff diving, so as the plane ascended to the point where I will be departing from it, I kept on thinking, "What the hell am I doing skydiving? What if I die?" Unlike some of the more adventurous people seeking the thrill of adrenaline rush, to fall out of the sky was never on my bucket list.

As my associate editor joked the night before my first ever skydive, it was I who insisted on doing this assignment, which I would say is 90 percent true. Most of it was because I wanted to try something new for my birthday, and getting to do it as part of my job was simply a big bonus.

So there I was the morning of March 11 with no preparation, save for having my last meal the night before, my last supper, because I was advised by a friend not to risk having food in my stomach when I jump. Not that I had the impulse to eat anyway, my stomach was already way ahead of me and felt like it was falling out of the sky already.

My fellow reporter Roselyn and I arrived at Skydive Saipan's facility near the airport past 11am where I met a Chinese tourist couple who will be jumping out of the same flight as I.

We were given some forms to fill and watched a demo video of the things we have to know for the skydive. An instructor further explained to us the positions we need to do from the moment we jump until we touch down on terra firma.

After that, we put on our blue jumpsuits and wait for our instructors to get ready.

Skydive Saipan manager Qiuna Taitano tells me that jumpers should be 18 to 65 years old and that he or she must not weight no more than 100 kilograms or about 220 pounds. She said they do 10 to 12 loads of up to five jumpers a day.

While waiting, I was told that I will be jumping from the highest elevation that Skydive Saipan is offering: at 14,000 feet with a full minute of free fall—that precious moment that every skydiver and adrenaline junkies love. As I am not very good at distances, I couldn't fathom what that was like, but my brain already stopped when I knew it was the highest and with that, I will be the first one doing it.

Few minutes passed and we met our instructors who probably just came back down to earth again. I was told they jump up to 10 times a day.

Out of Skydive Saipan's six instructors, I was assigned to Brad Patterson, who, like me, is fairly new to the island. He came from California and has been skydiving since he was 18 years old. Despite being new to the company, he was already trusted to get the best shots possible from skydiving as he has long arms which can get wider views from two GoPro cameras attached to his arm to take our photos and videos.

Brad tries to make me feel comfortable with his cheeriness, as all other instructors did. They were excited and made skydiving seem so easy, which probably is…for them.

After putting on our harness and our back-up parachute, the instructors lead us outside to where a plane was ready to take us to new heights, literally.

After some more reminders, we boarded the plane and off we flew.

Saipan's scenery, as always, is spectacular with various hues of blues from both the sky and seas, and patches of greens and browns from the vegetation and beaches. Seeing it from above always magnifies the beauty of this Pacific island.

As it gets higher and higher and the wind gets colder and colder and your heart beats faster and faster, suddenly it is time to jump.

Brad starts to fasten me tight to himself and make sure the buckles are locked.

When I asked him if people ever faint during jumps, he replied, "No, there's too much adrenaline."

One more thing I asked my instructor is if he would show me how the back-up parachute, that blue fanny pack-like thing that

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

me that when a staff of Skydive Saipan pointed to us the see me at all—not until a few more seconds passed.

was attached in front of me, will be launched, just in case.

With complete trust in their equipment and his skills, he replied. "We're not going to need that."

I learned that to get a basic license in skydiving, you need to do at least 25 jumps. To be licensed as a tandem instructor, you would have to make 500 jumps in three years.

Brad and his co-instructor Darin Quaille told me that they used to count their jumps, but after a while, they just "guess-timate" it to 1,000 to 1,500 jumps per year. (Crazy people, right?)

Both of them jumped from various places before, but they both agree that skydiving on Saipan is the best because of the amazing tropical paradise view.

Brad asks me to smile for the camera and say a message to friends and family. I already sent out a couple of I love you's to my husband and my mom before I rode that plane, but even so, in case it will be the last, I said to the camera, "I love you all and don't forget about me!"

I put on my goggles and Brad made sure it was correctly placed.

First, you Fall...

When it was time, Brad pushes me further near the door. My body was kind of heavy as I still tried to buy some more seconds. But it was not like I could back out at this point, I needed to produce an article for this, and I knew I wanted to try it anyway.

Because when we're closest to achieving what we want, that's when the urge to quit is strongest right?

As I looked out to the open sky, I was again asked to keep my chin up as was earlier instructed. More for safety reasons, but Brad said it also makes for better photos.

So I look further up in the sky, because frankly, it's scary to stare at your fall!

And then, as quickly as the buildup was slow, my tandem instructor pushes both of us out of the plane and before I even get full on terrified, I had no choice but to go with the fall.

As I saw myself parting further and further from the plane above me, I just kept on screaming my lungs out. I totally forgot that I needed to keep my feet together and fold my knees. I kept kicking and screaming with mouthfuls of air drying my throat.

A couple of seconds passed and Brad asked me to open up my arms—the second formation.

At this point, I pulled myself together and just tried to enjoy the view as was advised. I stopped thinking that I am falling as fast as gravity's nine miles per second multiplied by both my instructor's and my weight.

Despite the fear, there really is nothing that compares to the rush and the beauty that will surround you as you become one with the sky. I rode airplanes many times now and always giddy for the moment it separates from the ground, but nothing can ever compare to the feeling of actually, literally flying in the sky.

As the 60 seconds of free fall passed, Brad pulls the string of our parachute and I calmed down thinking now we're on the safer part.

I got to appreciate the view more. I saw the horizon clearly dividing the waters and the sky and saw how vast the ocean is. Up there, you are separate from everything else (except from your tandem jumper who's busy taking cool photos and making sure everything's going well) and you think of the people down on the ground that are just oblivious of the marvel above them.

...then you Fly

Little did I know that Brad had something up his sleeve. He starts tweaking my straps and in panic, I yelled, "What are you doing?!"

He laughed and after joking that he'll say bye to me, he said he was just adjusting it so that we'll be more comfortable.

"Because now, we fly!" Brad said. ➜

Left to right: Skydive Saipan has six expert tandem instructors and friendly staff who will make your experience a whole lot more enjoyable. Safety first! Harness is put in before you ride the plane. As I was seated nearest the plane's door, I was buckled to the plane so that, as Brad jokingly said, "We won't lose you." After landing, instructors quickly removed the parachute and the harness as they get ready for another flight. My co-jumpers and I had a great time with our instructors, although the lady said she won't do it again!

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Pulling on the steering lines of the parachute, I shrieked as the chute took us to the direction he pulled.

It was a whole new experience from the free fall and which I would say was the best part for me in the entire skydiving process. It really was flying and as he continually pulled to the right, I was treated to a glorious and legitimate 360° view of everything!

I also got to steer on my own and I was in awe of how great it was to be alive and that I get to fly like this.

...then you land

After a few more minutes—which felt only like seconds—it was time to land.

Brad took the controls from me, made a few more spins and turns, and got ready to land.

It was amazing how you couldn't actually feel how fast you were falling until you get nearer and nearer to the ground.

As we prepare to land, Brad reminded me to make the important third position of keeping my legs up with my knees slightly bent. In a tandem skydive, it's the instructor who actually takes care of landing on his feet as you hit the ground.

With the final rush of wind, I saw our landing target and down, down, down we went, perfect except for a little bump when my feet brushed past Roselyn as she was waiting for us to take photos of our landing.

It was amazing how from being scared, you belt out "Let's do it again!" as you jump back on your feet that is now safely touching the ground.

Skydive Saipan also provides a certificate and a DVD containing the photos and videos of your jump, which is really a great thing because, as my instructor said, I would need it otherwise, it will feel like nothing happened. Which is true, the jump was as quick as it was intense, and as clear as it was all blur, that's why recording your adventure is really essential—aside from having something to show for bragging rights, am I right?

In the end, words fail—no matter how hard I try—in describing the entire experience. Skydiving is really something that you have to do yourself to understand why there are those who are so into it.

As the instructors would say, if you're looking for an adventure and for that "good" feeling, you will find it in this extreme sport.

If you're a bit queasy, you can start with Skydive Saipan's basic jump at 8,000 feet which has 15 seconds of free fall. At 10,000 to 12,000 feet, you get 25 to 40 seconds of free fall. Prices start at $289.

Their trips start as early as 6am until 3pm onwards, depending on the demand. Walk-ins are seldom entertained so it's better to schedule your jump two or three days ahead, and call (670) 488-8888 or email email@saipanadventuretours.com.

As a final note, all I can say is: Try. It is but normal to feel scared about something you've never done before, but if you are thinking of doing this, I'd say there's no better way than doing it here on Saipan with Skydive Saipan.

When in more doubt, remember what poet Erin Hanson said:

There is freedom waiting for you.
On the breezes of the sky.
And you ask.
What if I fall?
Oh but my darling,
What if you fly?

If you fear the free falling part, skydive for the sake of parachuting. I assure you, flying like that doesn't compare to riding an airplane.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Skydiving on Saipan will make you appreciate and fall in love more the beauty of the Pacific and its islands. Despite the fear, it's what will comfort you most up there.

SKY DIVE SAIPAN

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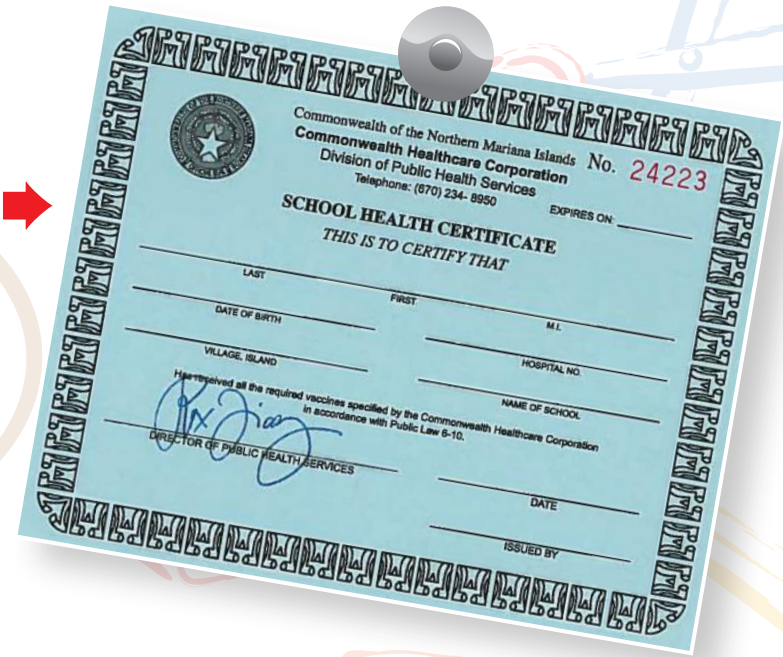
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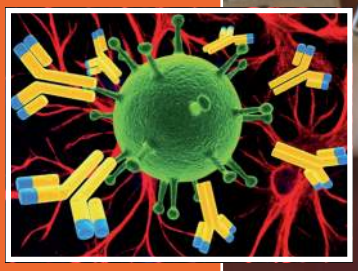
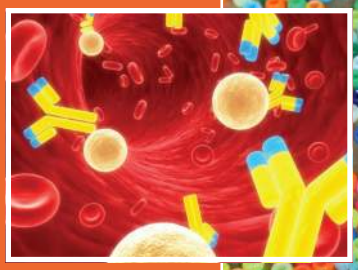


Child develops antibodies which act like little soldiers waiting for diseases to enter the body.



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THE UNION OF CHURCH AND PRIESTS ALSO

THOMAS MANGLONA II
Contributing Writer

Fr. Ryan Jimenez can be seen walking down the aisle of Mt. Carmel Cathedral to preside over mass daily. These days, you can spot the apostolic administrator of the diocese running, biking, and swimming outdoors as a part of local, regional, and international sports competitions. This triathlete priest has made strides in the sports arena and broken down barriers to live a healthy lifestyle and ultimately answer what he describes a "spiritual" call.

Pali Ryan recently completed his very first Tagaman Triathlon and was greeted at the finish line by supporters with banners and T-shirts reading "Priests also Tri," a reference to the competition.

But the accolades that come with being an athlete are far from his motivation to compete, which he said is to enjoy God's creation and creatures.

"This experience gives me a sense of reverence. Physical health is very much tied in to spiritual health," he added. "I am able to function well throughout the entire day when I take care of my physical health. I feel great; I feel connected to God's creation when I am outdoors."

He explained that as a priest, he needs both physical and spiritual exercises. He noted that the two reinforce each other and without either of them he would not be able to serve his religious purpose as an ordained priest.

That motivation resulted in his participation in various athletic competitions such as the Hell of the Marianas, Guam's Koko Marathon, and Saipan Swim Club's Meek and Mighty Ocean Swim.

As a kid growing up in the Philippines, Pali Ryan said that he was not very active.

"However, I loved the outdoors. My friends and I would swim in the ocean quite often, go the jungle to get guava and other fruits, or climb on trees and, during my grade school years, I remember we would even eat our lunch on top of a tree." He added," Sports or recreation back then was more of being creative and innovative on what nature had to offer."

With his more active lifestyle now, he explained that he makes time for exercise everyday.

"Even if it's just 30 minutes on busy days but I do have a physical activity everyday whether it's running at the track or on the beach, swimming at the tanks at the Naked Fish area or doing laps at the pool in Marpi…"

In his recent competitions, Pali Ryan said that successfully competing in sports takes three things: preparation, discipline, and patience.

He admitted that there are days where

he feels fatigued and unmotivated, but stays committed to his routine. He noted that food intake is of paramount importance as well.

"My sister also gave me a tip in running. She said 'when your legs hurt while running, run with your heart. I have kept these words as part of my motivation," he said.

His strides in sports have also translated to improvements in his health. As a diabetic, his blood sugar decreased substantially in the last two years as his competition log grew heavier.

On the heels of his first triathlon, Pali Ryan is already preparing for his next one, the Mt. Mayon Triathlon, in the Philippines later this year. He also plans to complete in a full marathon in Hawaii in December.

He says he "can already imagine the feeling at the finish line when my family would be there waiting for me."

SPORT: 'TRI'

Father Ryan Jimenez tackles the road bike portion of the 2016 Tagaman Triathlon.

ROMMEL BUENAFLOR

JUAN CAMACHO

from swimmer to baller

He has traded his trunks and flippers for basketball shorts and sneakers.

And he's loving the switch.

Juan Camacho is embracing basketball so much that as of this writing he is playing in three various leagues on Saipan.

So, how did a bemedaled CNMI national swimmer and former record holder got hook into another sport that his mother did not want him to try before because she's afraid his son might get hurt?

A humbling experience way back in his college days convinced him to make the change.

"I went to Portland, Oregon and attended Portland Community College," Camacho said.

"I continued to pursue my dreams of making it to the Olympics in the sport of swimming. I swam for my college and also competed in local swimming meets. However, my times were seconds shy of making it to the U.S. Olympic trials. That taught me a lot of humility, in a sense that there will always be someone greater than you and that you must continue to strive and work harder. I then slowly started gaining an interest in basketball, once again as I did in high school," he added.

Camacho used to play for Marianas Baptists Academy in the private school league so getting the feel of his new found love was second nature. He became a regular fixture in pickup games in Portland and when he returned to Saipan a couple of years ago, he continued to play basketball, joining one league after another.

"I shifted over to basketball from swimming because I enjoy the sportsmanship and teamwork. There is really little teamwork in swimming, except for when swimming in relays, but I just found it more fun to be able to converse and communicate on the basket-

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

ball court as you can't in the swimming pool," Camacho said.

In Saipan's basketball community, he is known as a workhorse. He can't hit those long bombs with ease like what Stephen Curry does nor make those LeBron James-like fancy moves, but still any coach would want Camacho on his team as he gets the dirty job done. He used those long arms that once touched the walls of the Kan Pacific Pool to shadow the opposing team's scorer and collar those rebounds against much taller players. He can score if he wants, too, but he often chooses not to as he is more focused on defense.

Proof of his defense-first-before-offense mindset was a series of plays in a league in Gualo Rai while he suited up for Docomo. He blocked a shot from an opposing team's player, picked up the loose ball, and ran with their point guard toward their frontcourt to complete a fastbreak layup.

"I love playing defense. I feel that scoring comes naturally, but opportunities to score more than you need comes off of a good, strong defense," he said.

With his pesky defense, Camacho admitted there are times some players get frustrated at him and provoked him to a fight. However, he has begged off from the tempting challenge, knowing there are a lot of kids watching the game.

"I have my kids watching me play, plus there are other kids out there. I don't want to set a bad example to them, so I just walk away. Besides, I am just here to play and enjoy the game, not to fight with someone," Camacho said.

His demeanor and work ethic on the court has endeared him to his teammates, won him a couple of championships and individual awards, and has gotten him repeated invitations to join basketball teams. Marlon Sison was among those who frequently included Camacho on his squad.

"Juan plays with a heart and a lot of determination every game. He has this never-say-die attitude that rubs off his teammates. When you get him on board, he honors his commitment by making sure he is available to play in every game," Sison said.

Early this year, Camacho surprised Sison and his teammates by playing a day after his dad (Arthur) died.

"At first I don't want to play, but my mom convinced me to. She said my dad would love to see me play and help my team win," Camacho said.

Swimming and family

Having supportive parents, including a protective mom, made it possible for Juan to get into swimming during his elementary school days.

"My Mom, Maria, and Dad, Arthur, both understood the importance of extracurricular activities in our family. Our family has violinists, swimmers, tennis players, basketball players, and baseball players," said Juan, who joined Saipan Swim Club with brother Michael in the early 2000s.

"My mom would never allow me to join any other sport but swimming. One day I asked why? She said, 'because you cannot get hurt when you're swimming.' "She is always right!"

Sticking into swimming seemed to be a good choice then as he was able to go places and represent Saipan Swim Club and the CNMI.

"My most memorable moment would have to be when Nina Mosley and I represented Saipan in Suva, Fiji for the Oceania Swimming Championships. We joined the 5K open water swim and swam through a school of blue jellyfish the size of a football helmet, and tentacles as long as 6-feet long," said Camacho, who used to train under CNMI Hall of Famers Bill and Jean Sakovich and Mike Stewart.

He treasured those swim moments that until today he still swims in open water.

"My brother Michael and I still swim recreationally to the tanks just as we did when we were young, and even to Managaha from Micro Beach. Living on Saipan, swimming will always be a part of our lives," the older Camacho said.

He also insists that although he is into basketball now, he is open to the possibility of returning to swimming.

"I can still go back to swimming any time, or even start my own swimming team if I really wanted to with my brother Michael. I wouldn't necessarily say that I am done with swimming. I still feel that since swimming is my first love, I want to give back to the sport here on Saipan," the 25-year-old Camacho said.

"Did you know that if you tally up all the medals the CNMI won in all the Micronesian and South Pacific Games, swimming has more than the other sports combined? I feel that this is more than enough reason to stress that we need a more accessible swimming pool for our youth," he said.

Now, with his return to the pool not happening soon, Camacho is just happy to see his nephew follow his and his brother's footsteps.

"My nephew, Anthony Jacob, is currently with Tsunami Saipan and I can proudly say that I and my brother Michael have truly inspired him. He just came back from Japan last March from a swimming competition and he is only 10. I keep teasing that my times are still faster than his when I was his age, Camacho said.

Camacho ended he would love to see his own kids try swimming or any other sport.

"I have actually introduced them to sports and it seems that my son Ioane has taken up the interest of swimming and baseball, while my daughter Imani would prefer to play basketball and also enjoys swimming. Who knows? Sports is like ice cream, you must try out a variety in order to fit your taste, right?"

A League OF THEIR OWN

ROSELYNB. MONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

No more co-ed leagues.

The growing population of women playing soccer deserved its own stage.

So, the Dove Women's Football League was born.

"We learned that a lot of women in the CNMI are getting involved in soccer and we were asked to help in whatever way possible. We talked to some of our suppliers/clients and finally found a product that matches with the concept of women in sports. Dove has products exclusively made for women to make them stand out and be the best they can, just like these female players hoping to excel in soccer or just enjoy playing among their friends and fellow moms," said Marilyn Marron, regional sales manager of D&Q Saipan, which distributes Dove products in Micronesia.

Dove has been supporting Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's women's league for the past three years and just this spring season, the former also sponsored a women's futsal competition. Dove provided uniforms to participating teams this season and in the past years handed over monetary assistance that was used to hold regular tournaments and training sessions/clinics.

"We are getting positive feedbacks that more and more women's players are getting interested in soccer so we feel that we are supporting a good cause. It's really great to know that we are able to provide venues (soccer and futsal leagues) for women who want to do something for themselves besides taking care of their families and going to work," Marron added.

The ongoing 9 vs 9 soccer games are played at Chacha Ocean View Middle School Field and sometimes at William S. Reyes Elementary School every Sunday and gather together six teams that have more than 10 players each. Over at the TSL Sports Complex in Middle Road, four squads are competing in the 5 vs 5 futsal matches every Friday.

Before each game and in between warm-ups, players share stories of how their weekdays have gone. During the game, they cheer for each other, giving high-fives to teammates who deliver good plays, and encourage those to make up for their mistakes in the next play. There are lots of fun, laughter, and camaraderie shared among the players—in their own pace and place.

"Every Sunday seems to be a festival of women's football at Chacha and it's a very encouraging atmosphere with children and husbands of the playing moms cheering for them," NMIFA president Jerry Tan told D&Q Saipan resident manager Max Kretzers during a recent turnover of Dove's donation to the CNMI women's soccer program.

"We're the only sport in the CNMI with the regular leagues for female players," Tan added.

Through the Dove league, its players rediscovered the natural athlete in them and strengthened their bond with their families.

"I grew up playing all sports, except soccer. I loved playing volleyball, basketball, softball, track, and even played tennis. I was constantly getting involved with sports. I was also a cheerleader and played basketball for the University of Idaho Lady Vandals, "said Catherine Toves, who suited up for the CNMI national volleyball team in the 1999 Pacific Games in Guam. ➜

"However, I stopped playing sports because I felt that it took too much time away from my children. As a mother, my life is no longer about me or my interest—it's about supporting my children and their needs and interests. Now that my children are older and are involved in sports, I get to support them by getting involved," she added.

Toves' children—Theresa, Merrick, and Markus—are with the Kanoa Football Club—and she eventually joined them and even coached Mt. Carmel School in the NMIFA Interscholastic U12 League.

"They grew to love the sport and I absolutely love watching them play so I ended up playing, too. As a mother playing football with other mothers, it has been a lot of fun. It started out as we played for exercise. Now, we tend to get a little competitive," Toves said.

"As a mother, it is very important to play any sport or find any physical activity. Having that outlet, within my busy life and responsibilities, playing soccer has given me time to just enjoy the sport and others company. My bonus is that I get to play with my daughter. And I love it when she praises me, gives me advice, and at the end of every game, she always gives me a hug," the transportation security manager at the Transportation Security Administration added.

Maria Ornes, who plays for one of the Kagman teams in the football league, also has her family to thank for introducing her to soccer.

"When my son first began playing, his team needed a soccer coach and I found myself coaching (read as chasing) a whole bunch of 4-year-olds around. Of course I knew nothing about soccer. I figured the best way to learn was to play, so I joined a team and played in the women's league," said Ornes, whose sons Cole and Casey play for Paire Football Club and husband Derek coaches.

" I have great a husband and supportive family," she added.

Sharing one interest—soccer—and staying active help keep her family together.

"I know that I become extremely cranky if I don't exercise. A cranky mom equals a cranky family. Everyone else in my family is the same way. We just all seem to do better, if we are out and about playing or exercising," Ornes said.

Laarni Zapanta also has her family involved in soccer so it was not surprising that she learned to play, too. She is a member of the MP United FC's women's team, while her husband Raymond coaches and plays for Kanoa. Her brothers-in-law (Raphael and Ruselle) also play the sport, while her sister (Irish) is in the women's league, and her father-in-law (Ross Zapanta) is the general secretary of NMIFA.

On weekends, she also brings her daughter Izzy to the pitch.

"Playing soccer is a good way for my family to spend quality time together. It is something we all enjoy," said Zapanta, who tries hard to find time to play despite her busy schedule at work and mommy duties.

"I think as a working mom, it is important for me to get involved in sports and stay healthy so I can better take care of my family. Also, I want my daughter to get used to the active lifestyle and learn at an early age that exercise is important for her health and there are fun ways to exercise such as playing soccer or other sports," she said.

Richard 'DOC' Brostrom

JON PEREZ
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

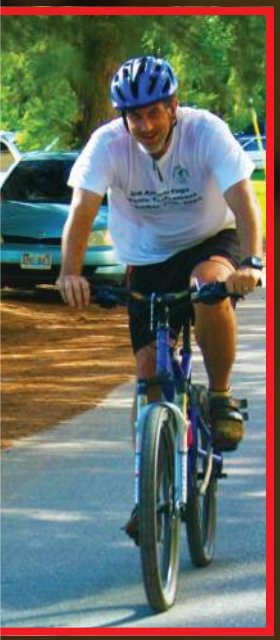
Dr. Richard Brostrom tried to maintain an active and sporting lifestyle once he relocated with his family in Hawaii. After all, he has a huge job of being the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention medical officer for the Pacific Region and the Tuberculosis Control program manager of the Hawaii State Department of Health.

Brostrom, the former CNMI Public Health medical director, told TAGA *Sports* that he now rarely plays basketball but tries to find time to do other outdoor activities. He and his family left Saipan in August 2010.

"The sporting lifestyle is harder to maintain when you live off-island. I play in several tennis leagues with my wife Sarah," said Brostrom, who is also the Pacific Regional TB field medical officer for the Division of TB Elimination of the CDC.

He tried the mountain bike trails in Honolulu but they are not that accessible compared to Saipan. "Less basketball now. Just playing in the doctor's league at University of Hawaii on Sunday morning. Some mountain biking, but it isn't nearly as accessible here."

Brostrom, who was inducted to the Lancer's Wall of Excellence of La Crescent-Hokah High School District in La Crescent in Minnesota in 2012, also enjoys hiking in Hawaii's rugged terrain.



But what he really misses on Saipan is the people and its sporting community. "I've enjoyed hiking more in Hawaii. I really miss the mix of great people on Saipan and the easy access to the trails and tennis courts, and the team sports."

Brostrom was the presence in the middle for the Commonwealth Health Center in the Inter-Government Basketball League and patrolled the shaded lane for several other teams in various basketball tournaments.

He still found success playing in Hawaii with his men's tennis squad making it to the State playoffs, while his basketball team in the doctor's league remains competitive. But nothing beats playing with and against friends.

"It isn't the same as competing with friends. Like everywhere else, competitive sports in Hawaii are intense, but there is no comparison to the joy of competing for and against my friends and colleagues on Saipan."

Mike Majors, the father of former CNMI swimmer Jillian, and multi-titled basketball coach Elias Rangamar visited him last month. "It's nice to see old friends. Mike and Eli stopped by and we had a great time talking about all the old basketball games in the '90s. Good times."

Brostrom, by the time this story gets published, will be staying for two weeks on Saipan for some medical work. TS

Company weight-loss program sheds 928 lbs

MARK RABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

Some 130 employees of Tan Holdings got a head start from losing weight for 2016 when the conglomerate's president Jerry Tan, with the help of the Saipan Soccer School and the respective human resources departments of affiliates, launched the team edition of Lose Big Win Big weight-loss program.

In total, employees divided into 11 teams who joined the competition lost 928.20 lbs or 4.31 percent of their original weight.

The Top 5 "losers" were POI Aviation's Adelbert Lizama (43 lbs), Fiesta Resort and Spa's Mauro Sabate (37.8 lbs), *Saipan Tribune's* Pauline Arurang (34.4 lbs), and Fiesta Resort's Dennis Floresca (34 lbs) and Mafie Trinidad (33.8 lbs).

Lizama said he was able to lose close to 50 lbs after cutting his meals and eating healthy food.

"My team encouraged me and when I started to lose weight I felt different and I could move a litter bit more," he said.

Sabate, for his part, said he became fit and healthy after sticking to a regimen that included smart and healthy eating and jogging three to four times a week.

Arurang said her main motivation for losing weight was she wanted to see her grandchildren.

"I really love my teammates because we encouraged each other to exercise and eat less and that's what I did. I ate less and did a lot of exercise," she said.

Floresca said from onset he knew weight loss would only benefit him in the long run. "You have to do diet and exercise. If you just diet and don't do exercise you will not lose weight."

His officemate Trinidad readily agrees and said one of the keys for her losing nearly 34 lbs was that she religiously watched what she ate and pushed herself to exercise as much as she could.

Lose Big Win Big coordinator Merlie Tolentino said the company-wide weight-loss program was implemented to foster healthy habits among Tan Holdings employees while at the same time encourage teamwork and camaraderie.

She also expounded the benefits of a healthy workforce, saying that companies who have overweight employees have 700 percent higher healthcare costs

Recent studies also show that overweight employees are 13 times more likely to miss work, file two times worker's comp claims, are two times likely to not get along with coworkers, have overall lower productivity while at work, and are generally at risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke.

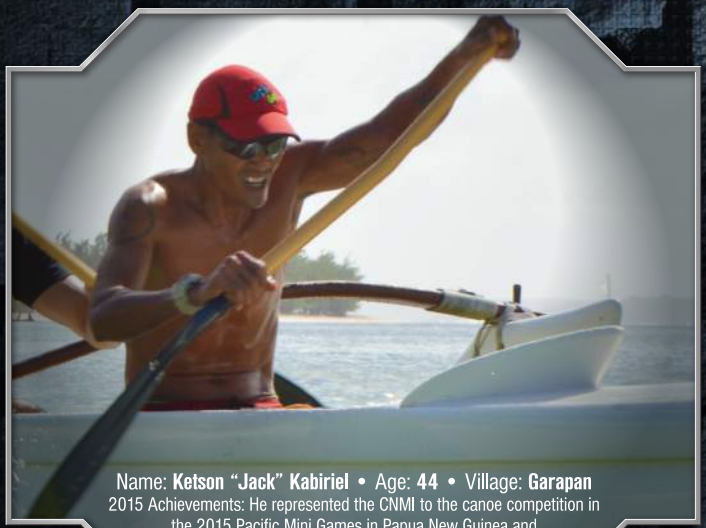
Because of the success of the program, which started in July and concluded in December 2016, Tan Holdings is expected to bring back the Lose Big Win Big initiative this year and as an added twist, the company is also looking at launching the same program for the island community as well.

"We're definitely bringing it back and we're also planning to launch the same project for the community this year," said Tolentino.

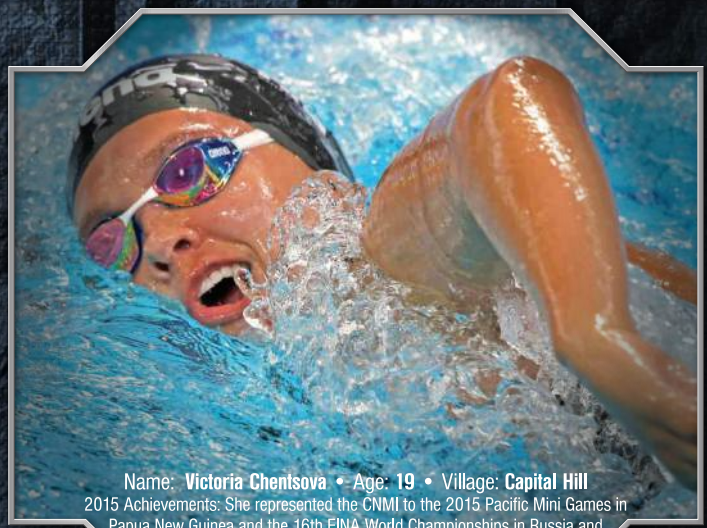
The Lose Big, Win Big project was organized by Saipan Soccer School and human resources departments of Tan Holdings.

CELEBRATE SUCCESS

2015 TSL FOUNDATION/NMSA ATHLETES OF THE YEAR



Name: **Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel** • Age: **44** • Village: **Garapan**
2015 Achievements: He represented the CNMI to the canoe competition in the 2015 Pacific Mini Games in Papua New Guinea and in a tournament in Guam



Name: **Victoria Chentsova** • Age: **19** • Village: **Capital Hill**
2015 Achievements: She represented the CNMI to the 2015 Pacific Mini Games in Papua New Guinea and the 16th FINA World Championships in Russia and set CNMI and age group records in the 400m and 800m freestyle.

Name: **Donavin Ada** • Age: **16** • Village: **San Vicente**
2015 Achievements: He won the bronze medal in javelin throw in the 2015 Oceania Area Championships held in Cairns, Australia. He topped the long jump, javelin, and discus events in the PSS/McDonald's All Schools Athletics Championships.

Name: **Carol Lee** • Age: **14** • Village: **Garapan**
2015 Achievements: She is the highest-ranked player in the entire Pacific, placing at No. 747 in the world rankings in the ITF Juniors. She is the only player in the Pacific to win the U12, U14, and U16 singles titles in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships.

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Tan Holdings

Tan Siu Lin Foundation

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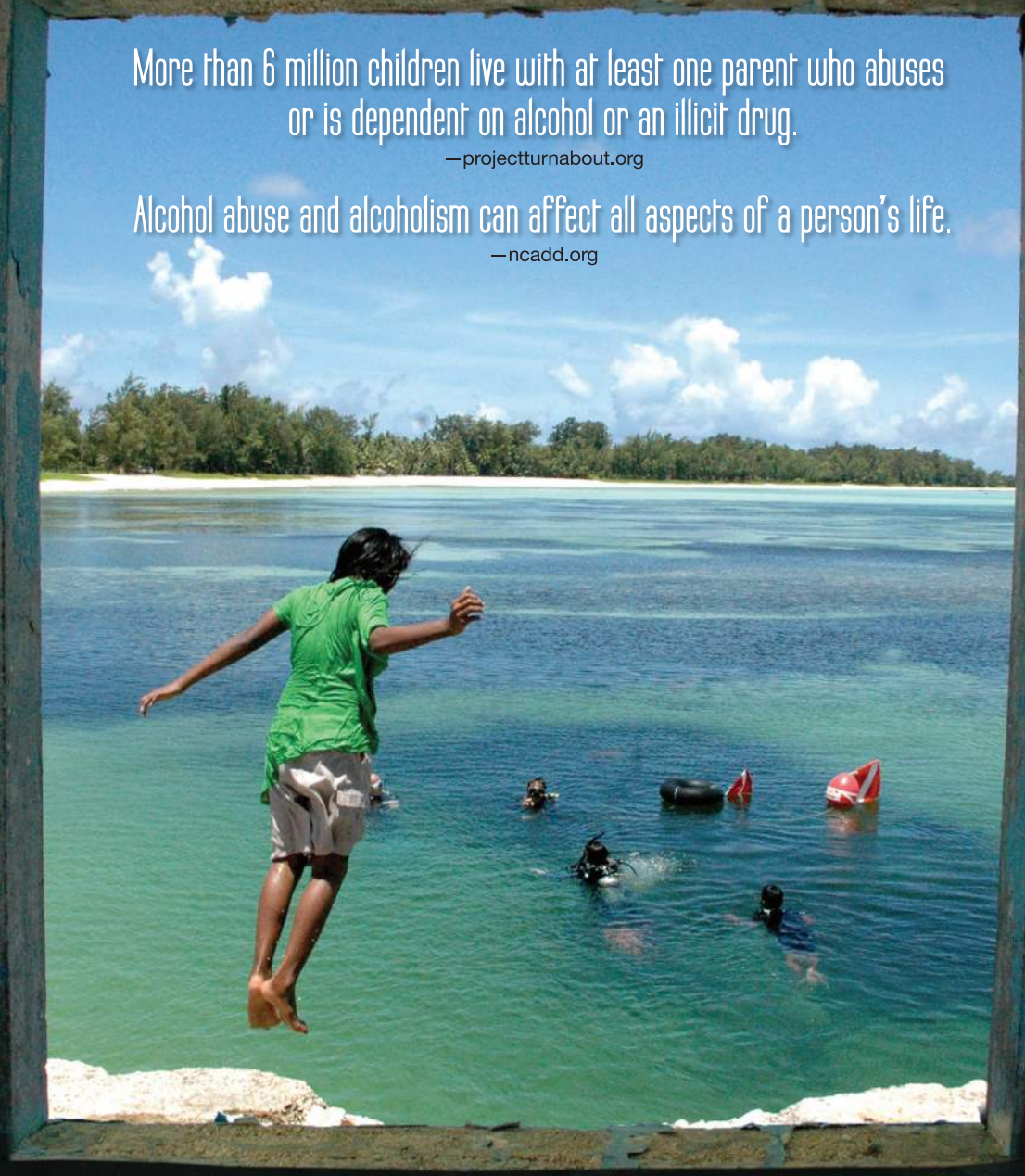
— Hans Sante
Kagman High School Student



More than 6 million children live with at least one parent who abuses or is dependent on alcohol or an illicit drug.
—projectturnabout.org

Alcohol abuse and alcoholism can affect all aspects of a person's life.
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